

THE INVENTION CLAIMED IS:

1. An aortic cannula having an elongate generally tubular side wall defining a conduit with distal and proximal ends, the distal end being adapted for insertion into the aorta during heart surgery to provide blood to the aorta, said conduit being separated into plural elongate lumens having smooth uninterrupted side walls and substantially equal cross sections extending back from the distal end of the cannula, said distal end being configured to permit substantially unrestricted laminar flow from all lumens out the distal end of the cannula.

2. The aortic cannula according to claim 1, having at least three lumens that spiral around each other near the distal end.

3. The aortic cannula according to claim 2, wherein the lumens spiral through at least 120 degrees.

4. The aortic cannula according to claim 1, wherein there are at least three lumens.

5. The aortic cannula according to any one of claims 1, 2, 3, or 4, which has a narrowed and rounded distal end.

6. The aortic cannula according to and one of claims 1, 2, 3, or 4 wherein the cross sections of the lumens are substantially identical end-to-end and to each other.

7. The aortic cannula according to claim 1, wherein walls separating the conduit into plural elongate lumens define a rounded web across the distal end which serves as a deflector when the distal end is being inserted in the aorta.

8. The aortic cannula according to claim 7, wherein at least a portion of the openings at the distal end face radially outward of the tubular side wall.

9. An aortic cannula according to claim 8, wherein the tubular side wall gradually narrows near the distal end and the area of the openings at the distal end is at least a

great as the cross-sectional area of the interior of the tubular side wall prior to where it narrows.

10. An aortic cannula having an elongate generally tubular side wall defining a conduit with distal and proximal ends, the distal end being adapted for insertion in the aorta during heart surgery to provide blood to the aorta, the distal end supporting a rounded rigid web across the opening in the end thereof which serves as a deflector when the distal end is being inserted in the aorta and said distal end being configured to permit substantially unrestricted laminar flow.

11. The aortic cannula according to claim 10, wherein at least a portion of the opening at the distal end faces radially outward of the tubular side wall.

12. An aortic cannula according to claim 11, wherein the tubular side wall gradually narrows near the distal end and the area of the openings of the distal end is at least as great as the cross-sectional area of the interior of the tubular side wall prior to where it narrows.